

BOOKS

Medical Research and Materiel Command. Romano is the Commander of the Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense (MRICD), Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. MRICD is DOD's premiere laboratory for medical chemical defense research.

Seven of the book's 14 chapters were authored or co-authored by MRICD experts in toxicity of chemical warfare agents and experts in development of medical countermeasures. Additionally, scientists from MRICD's sister laboratory—the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research—contributed to the book, as did scientists from the Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, academia, and allied government research laboratories.

The comprehensive text covers topics such as the health effects of low-level exposure to nerve agents and to the blister agent sulfur mustard, the acute and chronic toxicity of cyanide and riot-control agents, the development of pharmacological countermeasures to botulinum intoxication, and the psychological factors in chemical warfare and terrorism. Chapters also explore how stress can affect the toxicity of chemical agents, the effectiveness of treatment compounds, and the Army's pursuit of new methods of detoxification through the development of circulating scavenger enzymes and enzymes covalently bound to a decontaminating sponge. The final chapter discusses the emergency response to a chemical warfare incident and describes domestic preparedness, first response, and public health considerations.

ACQUISITION REFORM

Important Memorandums

Note: The point of contact for the following acquisition reform article is Monti Jagers, (703) 681-7571, monteze.jagers@saalt.army.mil.

Prior to his departure, then Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Dr. Jacques S. Gansler signed two very important memorandums that will significantly enhance the use of commercial practices and acquisitions in DOD. The subject of the first memorandum is commercial acquisitions, and the subject of the second is incentive strategies for Defense acquisitions.

Commercial Acquisitions

This memorandum directs that "To the maximum extent possible, commercial acquisitions should be conducted using Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Part 12." The integrated process team (IPT) that was chartered to review DOD commercial-item determinations found that obstacles to assessing commercial items include inconsistent commercial-item determinations, weak market research, and confusion concerning pricing of commercial items. The memo further directs that the following actions be taken to help overcome the barriers:

- Provide clarification on FAR Part 12 use for consistency in DOD,
- Establish goals,
- Request each Service and Defense agency provide an implementation plan to meet goals, and
- Request the IPT to determine feasibility of establishing a pilot program for developing a central database or other tools to assist in consistent commercial-item determinations.

Additionally, the attachment to this memo provides some immediate clarification, and the Commercial Item Handbook provides further guidance. The complete memorandum and attachment can be found at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/ar/doc/commercialacq010501.pdf>.

Defense Acquisitions

This memorandum stresses the importance of adopting "incentive strategies to successfully attract, motivate and reward traditional and non-traditional contractors, thus ensuring successful performance. Incentive strategies must also maximize the use of commercial practices to enhance our ability to attract non-traditional contractors."

As noted above, program teams are encouraged to structure incentive strategies to attract nontraditional Defense entities and reward successful performance of traditional Defense firms. Thorough market research should be conducted to develop a better understanding of the business strategy from the viewpoints of both the government and the contractor, leading to behavior that jointly achieves the mutual goals of all parties (e.g., best-value acquisitions and targeting high performance based on best-business practices).

Additionally, the memo's attachment provides guidance that amplifies existing policy regarding use of incentives in Defense acquisitions. To assist the acquisition workforce, an incentive guidebook is also being developed based on work conducted by the Army and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The memorandum, attached guidance, and guidebook can be found at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/ar/doc/incentives010501.pdf>.